



Visions Northwest Regional Economic Development Group
A Division of the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
WITC - Hayward
September 14, 2016

1. Meeting called to order at 9:38 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.
2. **Roll Call/Introductions:** Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, John Richards – Representing Burnett County, David Minor – Representing Douglas County (ITV), Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County (ITV), Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County, Dale Kupczyk – Representing Economic Development Organizations, , Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Jerry Hembd – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group), Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County,

Members Absent: Brent McFarland – Tribal Representative, Ken Maki – Representing Sawyer County, Becky Haase – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge), John Will – Representing Education (WITC), Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking)

Others: Marie Steenlage - WEDC, Thomas Michels – Department of Workforce Development, Ruthe Batulis – Enbridge, Sheldon Johnson – NWRPC, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest Administrator

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County

3. **Approval of May 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes**
A motion to approve the May 12, 2016 meeting minutes was made by Scottie Sandstrom; a second was made by Mike Bebeau. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Membership Terms and Administrative Guidelines**
Crystal explained that the executive committee of Visions Northwest met on June 30th to discuss and determine term limits for all members on the board per the approved recommendation from the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation (WBIC), Inc. WBIC's board oversees all administrative guidelines for Visions Northwest.

The approved language reads:
"Members will serve staggered three-year terms with one third of initial members holding a one-year term, one third holding a two-year term, and one third holding a three-year term. The Visions Northwest group will determine which members will hold which initial terms. There will be no limit to the number of terms a member may hold."

Members took time to review their respective terms. Discussion was brought forth by Jerry Hembd to replace Renee Wachter's representation from UW-Superior to NorthWERD on the member list handout. It was also stated that the acting president/chair of the NorthWERD group will be the serving member on the Visions Northwest Board in the future. A motion was made to approve the recommendations by Geri Dresen. A second was made by John Richards. The motion carried unanimously.
5. **Regional Wood Products Collaborative Update**
Crystal reminded the board of the [UW Center for Cooperatives](#) \$4,950 grant that was awarded to Visions Northwest to fund development of a collaboration of regional stakeholders on a wood products initiative. The first meeting of the collaborative was held on June 30th, 2016 between Visions Northwest Executive Committee members, WEDC's regional representative and forest sector staff, Eric Singaas with the NRRI, Collin Buntrock with WDNR Forest Products, and the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board. Following the initial meeting,

members were invited to participate in the Minnesota's State Wood Innovation conference call as a learning opportunity. In July, Kelly Klein and Crystal Rohde participated in a lunch meeting with Collin Buntrock and Don Peterson with the Wisconsin Wood Marketing Team to discuss the multiple efforts currently underway. Dialogue was continued over the course of the month regarding the collaborative forming a potential partnership with some of the Wisconsin Wood Marketing Team's efforts. The collaborative reconvened on September 13th and discussed possible future projects and potential funding for our region. Mari Kay Nabozny included comments from the September 13th meeting regarding her workforce perspective. Mike Bebeau also added that it may be beneficial to include tribal representation on the collaborative moving forward.

A motion to approve moving forward with potential project ideas and funding was made by Scottie Sandstrom. A second was provided by Mike Bebeau. The motion carried unanimously.

6. RIsE Recap and Next Steps

Crystal referred to the feedback surveys and results from each location included in the packet. Overall there was very positive feedback and comments. Participants reported that they were very interested in the topics presented and liked the breakfast format of the sessions. Crystal explained that all ideas generated including a list of priorities from each session were made available through an email directly to participants as well as on our website. Crystal also highlighted that the NWWIB has decided to build upon the RIsE platform for their upcoming RIsE³ Summit – Solutions to Bridge the Gap between Workforce Supply and Demand in October. Visions Northwest Executive Committee members recommended to do use this format to do another series of sessions in Spring/Summer 2017 in new locations throughout the region. The intention will be to continue as a collaborative effort between Visions Northwest, NWWIB and NorthWERD.

Mike Bebeau took a minute to publicly thank Jerry Hembd for his efforts in facilitating the first two events in Siren and Ashland.

7. WEDC FY17 Application for Base Funding

Crystal explained that the application was submitted by the 6-30-16 deadline to WEDC. She highlighted parts of the application that were relevant to the group's expected core functions. The application is similar to FY16 with the intention to build upon the foundation laid and initiatives implemented over the course of the last year. She noted that the talent and workforce retention and attraction piece of the application will likely become a required core function in FY18. Most of the other regional economic development groups in the state are tackling this through talent development alliances and focused training collaborations aligning to leading industry clusters and common career needs.

8. Supply Chain Initiative

Crystal gave the board members an overview of the [Wisconsin Supply Chain Marketplace](#) including a visual presentation of the actual tool implemented on the New North website (this information/web link was shared with members through email in August in preparation of the upcoming meeting). She explained that the goal is to match Wisconsin suppliers to targeted industry sector buyers and opportunity markets. She also referred the board to marketing materials provided by New North in the packet. Visions Northwest members were asked to make a decision whether or not to pledge \$10,000 over the course of the next two years (with automatic renewal of \$5,000 annually) to participate in the creation of a branded regional landing page for the northwest region, along with a regional aggregate of companies in the region who are entered into the Marketplace. The subscription would include maintenance of the tool during the three year period, with New North providing the overall development, hosting, oversight and upkeep of the site. The agreement would be contingent upon the approval of a \$100,000 Capacity Building Grant to the RLC by WEDC to fund the build out of the Marketplace to accommodate the statewide scale and regional marketplace aggregates.

Discussion began between members beginning with Kelly Klein who questioned whether or not there is a demand for something like the Marketplace in our region and if businesses would actually utilize the tool. Mari Kay Nabozny mentioned that the time and effort required to do the outreach to businesses would not be minimal on Crystal's behalf. She also questioned the need and if participation from regional business would be worth the money, time and energy the initiative would require. Jerry Hembd noted that in our region, businesses work across state lines because of our approximation to the Twin Cities and the Duluth-Superior metro areas when looking for suppliers, etc. Andy Albarado mentioned that by participating in the Marketplace, gaps in suppliers may be identified in our region. Mike Bebeau questioned the use of WEDC base funds between regions and whether the crossover of sharing funds would be acceptable.

A motion by Geri Dresen was made that while Visions Northwest will fully support the statewide effort, the group does not intend to financially support the proposed regional initiative of the Wisconsin Supply Chain Marketplace

at this time. Jerry Hembd offered a second and the motion to NOT financially support the Marketplace carried unanimously.

9. 2017 Tentative Schedule Review

Mari Kay Nabozny noted that she will not be able to participate in the first two meetings of 2017. Geri Dresen pointed out an error in the May 10th meeting – the May meeting should read Wednesday, May 10th, 2017 (not Thursday).

10. Around the Table – Other Business

Scottie Sandstrom highlighted the Wisconsin Innovation Network- Lake Superior Chapter's upcoming FabLab event taking place on September 22nd at WITC-Ashland. He also mentioned that he was invited to present on a broadband panel on how Economic Development interfaces with providers.

Dale Heikkinen gave an update on the Prentice Caterpillar Plant noting that the sale was still moving forward and that a number of jobs would be retained with the transfer of ownership to the new owner. Mari Kay Nabozny explained that wages would be offered at 75% and benefits will be greatly reduced.

John Richards proposed the questions about whether or not FabLabs have a local impact and how industry is involved. Kelly Klein noted that John should get in touch with the Hurley School District to discuss how it has served and interacted with industry in their FabLab.

Andy Albarado highlighted the upcoming [WEDA conference](#) taking place in Eau Claire from October 4th-6th.

11. Confirm Next Meeting Date

Crystal confirmed the next meeting date of November 9th, 2016 from 10AM-12PM at WITC-Hayward.

12. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dale Heikkinen, with a second by Mari Kay Nabozny.